

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste comprising surface-modified nickel fine powder having an average particle size of not more than 5 μm , and in which the surface of metal nickel fine particles is modified with a phosphate compound, a phosphite compound or a hypophosphite compound with an amount of the phosphate compound, the phosphite compound or the hypophosphite compound selected to improve resistance to heat shrinkage during capacitor manufacture.

2. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 1, wherein the phosphate, phosphite or hypophosphite compound is phosphoric acid, a phosphoric acid salt, a phosphoric acid ester, phosphorous acid, a phosphorous acid salt, a phosphorous acid ester, hypophosphorous acid, a hypophosphorous acid salt, a hypophosphorous acid ester, a phosphate residue-containing organometallic salt, a phosphite

residue-containing organometallic salt, a hypophosphite residue-containing organometallic salt, a phosphate residue-containing coupling agent, a phosphite residue-containing coupling agent or a hypophosphite residue-containing coupling agent.

3. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 2, wherein the phosphate compound, the phosphite compound or the hypophosphite compound is a phosphate residue-containing titanate coupling agent, a phosphite residue-containing titanate coupling agent or a hypophosphite residue-containing titanate coupling agent.

4. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 1, wherein the average particle size of the metal nickel fine particles is not more than 1 μm .

5. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 2, wherein the average particle size of the metal nickel fine particles is not more than 1 μm .

6. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 3, wherein the average particle size of the metal nickel fine particles is not more than 1 μm .

7. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 1, wherein the phosphate, phosphite or hypophosphite compound is adhered to the surface of the metal nickel fine particles in an amount ranging from 0.01 to 1% by weight as expressed in terms of the reduced amount of phosphorous atoms, on the basis of the total weight of the metal nickel.

8. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 2, wherein the phosphate, phosphite or hypophosphite compound is adhered to the surface of the metal nickel fine particles in an amount ranging from 0.01 to 1% by weight as expressed in terms of the reduced amount of phosphorous atoms, on the basis of the total weight of the metal nickel.

9. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 3, wherein the phosphate, phosphite or

hypophosphite compound is adhered to the surface of the metal nickel fine particles in an amount ranging from 0.01 to 1% by weight as expressed in terms of the reduced amount of phosphorous atoms, on the basis of the total weight of the metal nickel.

10. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 4, wherein the phosphate, phosphite or hypophosphite compound is adhered to the surface of the metal nickel fine particles in an amount ranging from 0.01 to 1% by weight as expressed in terms of the reduced amount of phosphorous atoms, on the basis of the total weight of the metal nickel.

11. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 5, wherein the phosphate, phosphite or hypophosphite compound is adhered to the surface of the metal nickel fine particles in an amount ranging from 0.01 to 1% by weight as expressed in terms of the reduced amount of phosphorous atoms, on the basis of the total weight of the metal nickel.

12. (original) The internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor prepared by using a conductive paste as set forth in claim 6, wherein the phosphate, phosphite or

hypophosphite compound is adhered to the surface of the metal nickel fine particles in an amount ranging from 0.01 to 1% by weight as expressed in terms of the reduced amount of phosphorous atoms, on the basis of the total weight of the metal nickel.

13. (new) A method of controlling a rate of heat shrinkage during manufacture of an internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor, comprising the step of:

printing an internal electrode on a ceramic substrate using a conductive paste comprising surface-modified nickel fine powder having an average particle size of not more than 5 μm in which a surface of metal nickel fine particles is modified with a phosphate compound, a phosphite compound or a hypophosphite compound in an amount selected to improve resistance to heat shrinkage of the electrode during capacitor manufacture by inhibiting a generation of any delamination and cracks in the electrode during manufacture of the ceramic capacitor.

14. (new) The method of claim 13, wherein, the conductive paste has an been modified to have the resistance to heat shrinkage to be close to a resistance of heat shrinkage of the ceramic substrate of the ceramic capacitor.

15. (new) The method of claim 13, wherein, the conductive paste has an been modified to have the resistance to heat shrinkage to be about equal to a resistance of heat shrinkage of the ceramic substrate of the ceramic capacitor.

16. (new) The method of claim 13, comprising the further step of modifying the surface of the nickel fine powder by immersing the nickel fine powder in a solution containing the phosphate compound, the phosphite compound or the hypophosphite compound dissolved therein to have the surface of the fine powder fully adapted to the solution.

17. (new) The method of claim 16, comprising a further steps of:

removing excess solution from the immersed metal nickel fine powder by filtration under reduced pressure; and

drying the immersed fine powder after removing the excess solution.

18. (new) A method of controlling a rate of heat shrinkage during manufacture of an internal electrode of a multilayer ceramic capacitor, comprising the steps of:

immersing a nickel fine powder having an average particle size of not more than 5 μm in a solution of a phosphate

compound, a phosphite compound or a hypophosphite compound to surface modify the nickel fine powder an amount selected to improve resistance to heat shrinkage during capacitor manufacture by inhibiting a generation of any delamination and cracks in the manufacture of the ceramic capacitor;

preparing a conductive paste using the surface-modified fine nickel powder; and

printing an internal using the conductive paste onto a ceramic substrate.

19. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein the immersion step is selected to result in the surface-modified nickel fine powder having a sharp heat shrinkage-initiating temperature shifted to not less than 900° C.

20. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein, the immersion step is conducted to provide a conductive paste having the resistance to heat shrinkage about equal to a resistance of heat shrinkage of the ceramic substrate of the ceramic capacitor.